

News Release

For immediate release: [INSERT DATE]

Contacts: [INSERT CONTACT NAME, AFFILIATION, PHONE NUMBER]
[INSERT OTHER CONTACTS AS NEEDED]

Groups invite community to discuss obesity and explore ways schools can improve nutrition and increase activity

In response to the growing childhood obesity epidemic in our state, [LOCALITY] groups and state agencies will host a community gathering to discuss the far-reaching consequences of children's inactivity and poor nutrition and to share ways schools can help address this serious problem. This open public forum will take place [DATE] from [TIMES] at [LOCATION]. For more information, contact [NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT FOR THE PUBLIC AND PHONE NUMBER].

Childhood obesity is now reported as an epidemic in our state and nation. The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled in the last 20 years in the United States. In Washington, about one in five youth in grades nine through 12 were overweight or at risk of being overweight in 1999.

The health consequences for our children are enormous. Overweight and obese children are at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and certain cancers. Overweight and obese children are often affected by discrimination, psychological stress, and low self-esteem.

"There are things we can do, but success requires real community involvement," said [NAME], [TITLE] for the [LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTION], which is hosting the event. "We would like to make it easier for children to choose health-promoting foods, be physically active, and be ready to learn at school." [MODIFY LOCAL QUOTE AS NEEDED]

[IF ANY LOCAL PROGRAMS WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED AS SUCCESS STORIES AT THE MEETING, INCLUDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION HERE.]

The meeting is one of six that will be held around the state by a coalition that includes the Washington State Board of Health, the Washington State School Directors' Association, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State Department of Health, the Washington State Parent Teacher Association, the Washington School Food Service Association, the University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition and local health jurisdictions serving Benton, Franklin, Clark, Island, King, Pierce, and Thurston counties.

Information regarding this and other community meetings, as well as information on the obesity epidemic and children's nutrition and physical activity, can be found on the Washington State Board of Health Web site www.sboh.wa.gov/Priorities/Children/SPAN/Forums

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